

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action mailed on September 8, 2005. Claims 1-5, 8-18, and 21-37 are pending in the Application, Claims 38-51 stand rejected, and Claims 1-37 have been indicated as being allowed. The indication of allowance of the claims is noted with appreciation. Claims 38-51 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In the outstanding Final Office Action, Claim 39 was objected to because of an informality; Claims 38-41, 46, 47, 49, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nishio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,220,129); Claims 38-41, 46, 47, 49, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mizuno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,920,916); Claims 42, 43, 45, 48, and 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishio in view of Kakimoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,377,769); Claims 42, 43, 45, 48, and 51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizuno in view of Kakimoto; Claim 44 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishio in view of Kakimoto and further in view of Yamashita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,836); and Claim 44 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizuno in view of Kakimoto and further in view of Yamashita.

In view of the cancellation of Claims 38-51 and the indication of allowed subject matter, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-summarized rejections are now moot. Their withdrawal is respectfully requested.

The present amendment is submitted in accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.116, which after a Final Rejection permits entry of amendments placing the

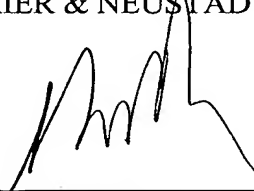
claims in condition for allowance.¹ As the present amendment cancels all the rejected claims in view of the allowed subject matter, the present amendment places the application in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be liberally construed, and that the present amendment be entered.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-5, 8-18, and 21-37 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representatives at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ See, for example, MPEP § 714.12.